



DRAFT

**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://latchildrencommission.org>**

Monday, August 18, 2014

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (14-3796)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Call to order. (14-3635)

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Candace Cooper, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, Commissioner Helen Kleinberg, Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin, Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman and Chair Genevra Berger

Excused: Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell and Vice Chair Steven M. Olivas Esq.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Introductions of August 18, 2014 meeting attendees. (14-3636)

Self-introductions were made.

2. Approval of the August 18, 2014 Meeting Agenda. (14-3637)

On motion of Commissioner Kang, seconded by Commissioner Cooper (Commissioners Biondi, Curry, Powell, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), this item was approved.

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of August 4, 2014. (14-3638)

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Cooper (Commissioners Biondi, Curry, Powell, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORTS

4. Chair's report for August 18, 2014 by Genevra Berger, Chair. (14-3639)

Chair Berger reported on the following:

- **Due to the Labor Day holiday on September 1, 2014, the next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for September 15, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 739.**
- **The next Transitional Team meeting for the Office of Child Protection is scheduled for Friday August 22, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in the Board Hearing Room 381B.**
- **DCFS Stat Meeting regarding the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) will be held on Wednesday, August 20, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. at DCFS Headquarters. Commissioners are invited to attend and inform staff by August 19, 2014 if interested.**

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Biondi, Curry, Powell, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), the Commission accepted the Chair's report.

5. Department of Children and Family Services Director's report for August 18, 2014 by Philip Browning, Director. (14-3640)

Director Browning reported on the following:

- **Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). The session will include first responder protocol on a smaller scale. In addition to the CSEC presentation, a data book that is published by DCFS on monthly bases, will be provided on the topic being presented. The data book is available in the offices of DCFS. Last years close to 500 referrals were identified as potential victims of CSEC.**

- During the last STATS meeting, managers were exposed to two different situations: one by LAPD, and one by Sheriff's Department. The situation pertains to two young ladies being victims of CSEC. The key of the presentation is the handling of the situation. Federal and State legislation have passed providing at a State level, funding to do with state specific and regional training issues. About half a million dollars has been provided to Los Angeles County to be utilized for first year funding for Regional Training Centers training purposes. The goal is to use the funds for training and to assist the victimized individuals. For the first year, a curriculum has been developed for staff foster care, group home providers, parents and other entities including Health Care providers and Law enforcement personnel. The second year is based on the application process. The biggest challenge is placement options for the victims.
- There was discussion on the State level pertaining to the unaccompanied minors. The largest centers were in Texas and Ventura, which are winding down. However, there are still some unaccompanied minors in the system and the question is where these individuals are going. The first focus will be the schools. LAUSD can handle up to 1000 individuals. A nonprofit organization in the City of Bell is in the process of applying to acquire a contract to assist the unaccompanied minors. Los Angeles County is not impacted, but is monitoring and tracking the calls regarding unaccompanied minors.
- The exit conditions of the Katie A. continues to be progressing. State will be exiting in three to four months, but there is an uncertainty on the level of care.
- State government has passed legislation addressing the equity of foster care payments to relative caregivers. Counties can choose to participate or not. The grant covers those already in the system, but not those who will come in future years. October 1st is the deadline in deciding for a January 1 start date.

In response to questions posed by the Commissioners, Director Browning responded:

- The mental care provided to the children in Los Angeles County compared to 10 years ago has greatly improved. In most cases, relatives are the best choices for placement. Virtually there is no fatality for children under the foster care and group homes. The issue is limited funds and the payments for care are low, and the placements for some of the youth are challenging.

- **The first responder protocol goal is to keep young individuals from entering the Juvenile Justice System.**
- **Outreach to other areas for foster parents has been in place and partnership with UCLA is in the works.**

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Biondi, Curry, Powell, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), the Commission accepted Director Browning's report.

6. Update by Sylvia Drew Ivie, Commission Executive Liaison, on the Commission's activities. (14-3682)

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Biondi, Curry, Powell, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), this item was continued to September 15, 2014.

III. PRESENTATION

7. Presentation on the Domestic Violence issues in Child Welfare.

Olivia Rodriguez, Executive Director, Domestic Violence Council
Jennifer Hottenroth, Domestic Violence Liaison and High Risk Services Division,
Acting Division Chief, Department of Children and Family Services
Rachelle M. Neshkes, J.D., Staff Attorney, Community Legal Services
Gail J. Piincus, LCSW, Executive Director Domestic Abuse Center (14-3680)

Rachelle M. Neshkes introduced herself and the panel. Ms. Neshkes has been representing Domestic Violence (DV) clients for the last 11 years. Ms. Neshkes also informed that she spoke before Blue Ribbon Commission for Child Protection (BRCCP) pertaining to her DV findings, and was hopeful that DV would have been incorporated into the BRCCP final report; however, DV was not included in the final report by the BRCCP.

Ms. Neshkes further added that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) exists in approximately 25% of all homes in the United States. IPV may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in this country. Children from homes with IPV have up to 15 times the risk of physical abuse. Toxic Stress changes the architecture of the brain by damaging neurons.

Jennifer Hottenroth added that DCFS is made aware of the DV by parents but through the process, DV may not be identified. One must develop a trusting relationship with the victim and the children and the process will bring to focus what is going on. Recognizing the importance of this issue, the department redesigned the learning academy, for all new-hired CSW. The learning academy and the simulation have been helpful. The training is ongoing for all personnel.

Ms. Hottenroth highlighted that role-playing and scenarios are used to investigate child abuse allowing the new hired CSW to watch, learn and make a determination on how to address the issues. Training curriculum was observed and the suggestion to add a third day of training by DV experts was approved by the Department. Additionally, the monthly meetings with management have been beneficial in defining the issues, and what services are provided to the family members. Successful methods are discussed including what the challenges are.

Gail J. Piincus then specified that victims are seen on three case scenarios: 1) Criminal Court; 2) Family Court; and 3) Child Protection. For example, a victim of domestic violence is frequently involved in three simultaneous cases: criminal because of police involvement; family court because of child custody and divorce issues; and, if there are children, law enforcement will call DCFS on every single domestic violence case. Within the three cases: the focus in criminal court is on the perpetrator and the victim is the victim; in family court, the victim is seen as exaggerated, hysterical, and over protective, alienating mom, while the perpetrator is seen as a good enough father; and in child protection, she is seen as a neglectful mother who fails to protect the child(ren) with an invisible father. The behavior in criminal court, the victim is seen as nervous, persistent and afraid; while in family court, the victim is seen as obsessive and uncooperative; and in child protection, the mother is seen as not being able to make a choice between the abuser and her children. In criminal court, the mother seems protective; in family court, she is seen as an alienator; and in child protection, she is seen as requiring mandated services or refusing to cooperative. In criminal court, she is seen as an intimidated witness; in family court, an exaggerator; in child protection as confirming the child's risk and the unfitness of the mother to care for that child. Again, in criminal court the dad is the offender; in family court, he is the good enough dad; and in child protection invisible. In criminal court, the victim is seen as one; in family court, she is seen as the one who claims to be an abuse victim; and in child protection, neglectful and inadequate protector.

In criminal court, the victim's fear is visible; in family court the fear is seen as paranoia; and in child protection her fear is seen as a symptom of danger to the child. In criminal court, the victim is seen as a "Safe" contact; in family court, the victim is seen as bias against the father; and in child protection the victim allows no contact. (*See Supporting Document, Pages 5 through 7*) These scenarios are commonly known as "Batter mother's dilemma," when the offending partner forces the victim to choose between her own and her child's safety. The dilemma is: 'If I do what the court wants, I put myself and my child at risk.' 'If I don't, I lose my child.' Ms. Piincus expressed that the goal is how we can work together as a community, and to educate and collaborate with each other. The exit order is crucial in protecting the child and the victim.

Olivia Rodriguez concluded the presentation by adding that collaboration between agencies is crucial. The new training for all new-hired CSW is essential and must include specific information regarding DV. The new policy protocol implemented in DCFS training focusing on effective response to DV is a huge component. Ms. Rodriguez further added that the DV Shelters are providing training to DCFS staff.

In response to questions posed by the Commissioners, Ms. Rodriguez, Ms. Hottenroth, Ms. Neshkes and Ms. Piincus responded with the following:

- CSWs are being trained on the need of the DV children to feel safe and to conduct interview with the children in a private and safe place. Echo Parenting organization has developed a parenting model for DV clientele for family visitation. The goal is to incorporate the training for any individual that is dealing with visitation for DV cliental.
- Court funding for safe-at-home programs for professional monitors during visitation has been suspended. Currently, there are number of visitation centers, but they do not include any DV clientele.
- The relationship with CSW is critical because CSW has the actual contact with the client. On occasion, the DV counselor has been asked to do a risk assessment and a report on the history of violence for the CSW. Once this information is provided to the CSW, it becomes a permanent document in the file. The issue is some CSW concentrate solely on physical injuries.
- Core Practice model is changing the attitude of the CSW with additional focus on child and family meeting, emphasizing on teamwork and using formal and informal reporting with the focus on the safety net. The decision is not solely on the CSW but the evaluation of the whole team.

- **Judges are currently being trained on the issue of DV, and educating judges is a key element. Most think their statutory duty is to reunite families. They need more education on Domestic Violence**

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Biondi, Curry, Powell, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), the Commission accepted Ms. Rodriguez, Ms. Hottenroth, Ms. Neshkes and Ms. Piincus' report.

Attachments: [Supporting Document](#)

IV. DISCUSSION/APPROVAL

8. Discussion and approval to send a letter to the Board of Supervisors expressing the Commission's support of SB 837 (Steinberg), legislation which would allocate \$15 million statewide of the moneys appropriated for State Preschool in Budget Act of 2014 for purposes of professional development stipends, to be administered by local planning councils for teachers in transitional kindergarten and teachers in the California State Preschool Program. (14-3693)

On motion of Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Vice Chair Friedman (Commissioners Biondi, Curry, Powell, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

V. COMMISSIONER UPDATE

9. Update by Commissioner Sorkin on the distribution of parking funds. (14-3681)

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Biondi, Curry, Powell, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), this item was continued to September 15, 2014.

10. Update by Commissioner Friedman on the new commercially sexually exploited children. (14-3692)

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Biondi, Curry, Powell, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), this item was continued to September 15, 2014.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

11. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (14-3641)

There were none.

Announcements

12. Announcements for the meeting of August 18, 2014. (14-3642)

There were none.

Public Comment

13. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (14-3643)

No members of the public addressed the Commission.

Adjournment

14. Adjournment of the meeting of August 18, 2014. (14-3644)

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.